

CADET NURSING CORPS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, some of us are barely old enough to recall the end of World War II. And we remember that it was an effort that involved the entire Nation in a monumental struggle against the evil of fascism.

During World War II the United States sent more than 250,000 nurses to the front lines to care for our wounded Allied troops.

By 1942, the country was experiencing a shortage of nurses for domestic medical needs. In fact, the shortage was so severe that many clinics were forced to close.

To alleviate our domestic medical crisis, Congresswoman Frances Payne Bolton introduced legislation creating the United States Cadet Nurse Corps in 1943. Over the next 5 years, the Corps recruited about 125,000 young women to assume the duties of nurses who had been dispatched to the front lines. Throughout World War II, cadet nurses accounted for 80 percent of the nursing staff in our domestic medical facilities.

Cadet nurses completed rigorous training under the jurisdiction of the Public Health service. They also pledged to serve at any time during the war, at any hospital or clinic where they might be needed. They were often required to leave their families and fill vacant positions across the country. They acted as both caregivers and medical doctors—as there was also a scarcity of doctors—to the sick and wounded.

The Cadet Nurse Corps provided the support of health care system needed. By putting the needs of the Nation ahead of their own, these young women made it possible for Allied troops to receive the best possible medical care during a time of war.

Although the uniforms of these dedicated cadet nurses were decorated with patches certified by the Secretary of the Army, and they served under the authority of commissioned officers, the Cadet Nurse Corps has never been recognized as a military organization.

Today, many of these cadet nurses are no longer living. Those who do survive are in their seventies and eighties. Ironically, they are not entitled to use the veterans health care system, nor do they receive other benefits such as disability pay.

Even more important, they rarely receive the recognition they deserve for their service to their country. And every year, as more of the cadet nurses pass away, it becomes too late to recognize them.

These women served their country in a time of war. I believe they deserve to be recognized as veterans of that war effort. Therefore, I support veterans status for members of the Cadet Nurse Corps.

I have introduced legislation that would accomplish this goal. I hope my colleagues will support this effort so we can finally properly recognize the cadet nurses for their outstanding service to this country.

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, as we approach the Thanksgiving Day holiday, we as Americans have much for which to be thankful. Around dinner tables this year, there will be added joy of loved ones returning home especially in the case for those families of members of our Armed Forces. Other homes may not be as joyful, as those who have chosen to defend their Nation are stationed abroad, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan. Both of these scenes will occur in my home State, NM.

We as a Nation are ever grateful to the men and women of our military and the families they leave behind to serve. Today, I rise in support of an important effort to assist these dedicated military personnel and their families.

The Armed Forces Relief Trust, AFRT, is a non-profit fund established to help ease financial burdens on our military personnel and their families. With so many of our troops on extended overseas deployments, the benefit provided by the Trust is needed more than ever.

Today nearly 140,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are deployed overseas in the war on terror. Thousands more are stationed abroad guarding our freedom. For the families left behind, the financial burden of caring for children and meeting other demands can be a strain. And with an increased number of National Guardsmen and Reservists currently overseas, the number of families facing such hardship is even greater.

In my own home State of New Mexico, many have been affected by the frequent and lengthy deployments associated with the war on terror. Most recently, 60 National Guardsmen from the 515th Corps Support Battalion out of Springer, NM, were activated to support combat forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom. They join more than 900 other New Mexico Guardsmen already deployed worldwide, including those from the Army's 717th Medical Company and the 720th Transportation Company—both from Santa Fe. And only recently did we welcome home to Las Cruces the 281st Transportation Company following its service in the Persian Gulf. These many deployments from New Mexico represent what is happening all over the country.

Clearly, many military members and their families face burdens that are compounded by months of separation and tight budgets. For example, a soldier overseas might face the unexpected cost of airfare to attend his father's funeral; a deployed airman's expectant wife might incur costs for special medical care; or a sailor's child may need assistance to cover burdensome costs associated with attending college. These situations are what the Armed Forces Relief Trust is designed to address.

It seems to me that these are the sorts of things that we ought to be

doing to help boost the morale of our troops. Many endure months away from home and, in some cases, face the pressure of operating daily in a combat zone. The kind of benefit provided by the Trust gives them some peace of mind and allows them to focus on their vital mission. I salute the Military Aid Societies representing the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps for coming together to create the Armed Forces Relief Trust. Perhaps more importantly, I salute all those who have donated to the Trust and are helping to ensure that the needs of our brave military personnel and their dedicated families are being met.

As we all gather with our families this Thanksgiving and count our blessings, I believe we should remember our brave men and women in uniform, and consider supporting the Trust and its work to these personnel and their families in need.

AIR POLLUTION CLOSE TO HOME

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I would like to ask my colleagues and the American public some serious questions today—questions about air pollution and its impacts closer to home.

Many of us listening today have children and grandchildren. How many of them have asthma? How many of us have taken children to the emergency room in the middle of the night, desperate to put a stop to their terrifying asthma attacks?

How many of the Nation's growing number of asthmatic children have to carry inhalers to school, and wish they could run, play, and breathe freely like the other kids?

How many Americans know young children who depend on their asthma inhalers to get safely through a simple game of baseball? Their asthma attacks could be some of the six hundred thousand caused by air pollution every year.

How many of our own children or grandchildren yearn to play outdoors during school recess, only to have their teachers warn them the air is too unhealthy?

How many of us have parents or siblings with emphysema? Or chronic lung disease? Reduced lung function, or lung cancer? Air pollution decreases lung function and causes asthma and asthma attacks, lung disease, emphysema, lung cancer, and heart problems.

Do Americans ever worry that their own lives may be shortened by three or four years, just because the air is so dirty?

Sixty thousand people die prematurely in this country every year because of air pollution. It's hard to believe, isn't it? Let me put it another way.

Air pollution is responsible for more deaths than breast cancer, colon cancer, pancreatic cancer, skin cancer, prostate cancer, brain cancer, lymphoma, or leukemia.

Half of the deaths caused by air pollution are due to power plants alone. In